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978-0-521-82453-8 - The Lion and the Springbok: Britain and South Africa since the Boer War

Ronald Hyam and Peter Henshaw

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## The Lion and the Springbok

*The Lion and the Springbok* presents a unique account of the dynamics and divergences of the 'uneasy special relationship' between Britain and South Africa. From the bruising experience of the South African War (1899–1902) to South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth in 1961, the authors chart this relationship in all its political, economic, cultural, and geostrategic aspects.

All the major disputes are discussed, including the struggle for the High Commission Territories, the crisis over Seretse Khama's marriage, and the transfer of the Simon's Town naval base. These issues trace, for the most part, a continuing deterioration in relations, as Afrikaner nationalist identity hardened and South African politics slid into the extremes of apartheid. The perceptions each side had of the other after 1948 are examined through representations in the media, and an epilogue considers the reasons for the return of the 'new South Africa' to the Commonwealth in 1994.

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Nelson Mandela after admission to an Honorary Fellowship at Magdalene College, Cambridge, 2 May 2001. Left to right: security officer, Dr Mandela, Cheryl Carolus (South African high commissioner), Professor W. R. Cornish (President), Professor Sir John Gurdon (Master), Thabo Makupula (Mandela Magdalene Scholar). *Source:* Magdalene College Archives, P/30/2/10

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## Preface

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'A special relationship and its mutual benefits, which history has bound us in' is how Nelson Mandela described relations between Britain and South Africa in the spring of 2001. The tragedy is that for most of the twentieth century this 'special relationship' was compromised, first by jingoistic Britain, then by Afrikaner nationalist South Africa. This book is about that tragedy.

We have worked together, with a shared outlook, over many years, with the long-term intention of producing a study more comprehensive than either of us could have managed to write by ourselves. Since it is based overwhelmingly on fundamental research in British government archives,<sup>1</sup> there are two inevitable limitations. One is that the perspective is mainly, though not exclusively, from the British side – so the book finds its home in the general field of British imperial and Commonwealth history, as well as South African history. The other is that the emphasis is on the period before the departure of South Africa from the Commonwealth in 1961, the British government's 'thirty-year rule of access' – in practice more like thirty-five years – preventing us from tackling the issues after the 1960s with anything like the authority we hope we bring to the period before then.

Our main concern is with inter-governmental relations, and we do not aim to give an account of the long British tradition of radical and liberal criticism of what happened in South Africa. But in conformity with current historical interest in identity-formation and media representation, and since it would otherwise look hopelessly incomplete, we have traced anti-apartheid opinion through to the 1990s (using newspaper evidence). South African perceptions of Britain are also examined. And we have attempted in an epilogue a brief assessment of the return of the new South Africa to the Commonwealth in 1994.

We present a series of studies rather than a connected narrative, but our chapters are not chosen at random. Their selection is dictated by the weight of evidence surviving in the archival record: in other words, they reflect the issues

<sup>1</sup> Although many other overseas archives have been trawled, the returns were much less rewarding, not least because the National Party government in South Africa operated a 'fifty-year rule' of access, and in the 1980s and early 1990s imposed a blanket closure on external affairs records.

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which excited most attention at the time. There might be objections to this way of proceeding, but it can hardly be said to be unhistorical.

We deal with problems which have always been controversial, and are contested by scholars. We should therefore like to express our thanks to those historians and social scientists with whom we sometimes disagree, since they have provided not merely additional stimulus but also a sense of historiographical purpose. More positively, we wish to thank a number of research students who have contributed enthusiastically to the project over the years, among them more particularly Simon Cardy, Marc Feigen, and Lesley Reeves; and to thank our colleagues Rodney Davenport, Alan Jeeves, John Lonsdale, Bill Nasson, Ian Phimister, Christopher Saunders, and Iain R. Smith, for their friendship and support, though we hasten to add that we do not mean to claim from them any sort of endorsement. Finally, we should say how much we have appreciated the patience and expertise of Andrew Brown and his team at the Cambridge University Press.

*South Africa Freedom Day, 27 April 2002*

R. H.  
P. J. H.

My particular understanding of Anglo-South African relations has been sharpened up over many years by discussions with the late Nicholas Mansergh and R. E. Robinson, with Noel Garson, Ged Martin, and David Throup, and above all with Rodney Davenport. I had the good fortune to have a family home close to the Public Record Office at Kew. My research has been generously supported in Cambridge by Magdalene College, with grants from the Morshead–Salter Fund, and by the Managers of the Smuts Memorial Fund, who enabled me to travel through the heartlands of Afrikanerdom in the darkest days of apartheid, and to visit Swaziland, Lesotho, and Mozambique. I remain grateful for the hospitality and insights of the USPG Fathers of the Community of the Resurrection at their mission houses in Luyengo, Swaziland, and Rosettenville (Sophiatown), Johannesburg.

R. H.  
Cambridge

My work on this book began in 1986 as a Cambridge PhD student with Ronald Hyam, continued in Cape Town from 1990 to 1997, and was completed at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. It could not have been accomplished without the assistance of a number of individuals and institutions. For their financial support, thanks go to St John's College, the Managers of the Smuts

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P. J. H.  
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## Abbreviations

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The following abbreviations are used in the footnotes:

<b>BDEEP</b>	British Documents on the End of Empire Project
<b>CAB</b>	Cabinet Office Records
<b>CO</b>	Colonial Office Records
<b>CRO</b>	Commonwealth Relations Office
<b>DO</b>	Dominions Office/CRO records
<b>FO</b>	Foreign Office
<i>HJ</i>	<i>Historical Journal</i>
<i>JAH</i>	<i>Journal of African History</i>
<i>JICH</i>	<i>Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History</i>
<i>JSAS</i>	<i>Journal of Southern African Studies</i>
<b>PREM</b>	Prime Minister's Office Records
<b>PRO</b>	Public Record Office, Kew
<i>SAHJ</i>	<i>South African Historical Journal</i>